



Many small and medium sized farms need extra help during the busy growing season, but labor cost are often an issue. Also, there are many young and aspiring farmers who want to gain more experience or knowledge, but there is limited formal training. Farm internship programs can offer a great solution to both.

Host a Farm Intern

Hosting an intern on your farm can be a very rewarding experience. Not only is it a great way to add to your labor force, it's also an opportunity to pass on your knowledge and expertise to an aspiring farmer.

Depending on how you set up your intern program, or the arrangements you make with each, hosting an intern can take a variety of forms:

- Farm interns are generally provided with housing on the farm, which could be in the form of a tent, trailer, guest house, or a room. If the farm is located near an urban area, "off-site" living arrangements are also a possibility.
- Meals and/or food are usually provided, especially if interns do not receive a living stipend. Fresh produce and other products from the farm are usually offered as well.
- Some farms only offer room and board, while others are able to offer interns a stipend of \$50 to \$100 dollars or more per week. Some also might offer a percentage cut of sales to their interns.
- Many farms host an intern on a trial basis, whereby if things work out, longer term

arrangement can be made. Many also require that interns commit to at least 3 to 6 months of work.

- Some farms treat interns more as “workers,” while others welcome interns into their homes and family activities. The choice is up to you and may vary from one intern to the next.

Here are some tips and resources that may help you secure a farm intern this season.

- Get the word out in the community that you are looking for an intern, or advertise on local sites such as [craigslist](#).
- Many college students are looking for summer internship opportunities, so be sure to advertise at your local university.
- Register as a “host farm” on a variety of websites such as [WOOOF-USA](#), [organicvolunteers.org](#), or the [National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service](#).
- This will allow interns locally and internationally to find your intern program.

Become a Farm Intern

Working on a farm is hard work but it is also a rewarding experience - especially if you want to learn the necessary skills to start your very own farming operation. Being a farm intern is not only one of the best ways to learn *how* to farm, it is also a great way to learn first hand if farming is the right business for you to pursue. Also, many people choose to intern just for the experience and knowledge, and are not necessarily interested in farming as a career.

So what can you expect if you are a farm intern?

- As an intern you may work anywhere from 4-8 hours per day, 5 or 6 days a week. As farming is not a 9 to 5 job, you can expect to work some irregular hours.
- In most situations you will receive at a minimum room and board, and there may be a small monetary stipend depending on the farm. If you require a stipend to pay existing bills, the number of farms you can intern at may be limited.
- Depending on the farm, your internship experience may be a very social or solitary experience. If you are the only intern on a farm in rural location, you can expect to spend a lot of time alone or with your host family. A farm that hosts 2 or more interns or is located near an

urban area will provide you with more opportunities to socialize. Be sure to keep this in mind when selecting a farm.

- If you are interested in interning at a farm in another state or overseas, keep in mind that you have to pay your transportation costs to get there.

To become a farm intern, ask around in your community or approach some local farmers to find out about existing opportunities. Be sure to also search farms on the websites listed in the section above.